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UNCLAS ACCRA 002335

SIPDIS

E.O. 12958: N/A

TAGS: [PGOV](#) [PREL](#) [GH](#)

SUBJECT: AMBASSADOR'S MEETING WITH MAJORITY LEADER AND
SPEAKER OF PARLIAMENT

[11.](#) Summary: On November 9, the Ambassador called on Ghana's Majority Leader (and Minister of Parliament) and Speaker of Parliament. She emphasized the importance of parliament and good governance. Both parliamentary leaders praised US-Ghana ties and hoped for more USG support. The Speaker said the major legislation in the current parliamentary session are mining and whistleblower laws, the People's Representation bill, and the budget. End summary.

[12.](#) On November 9, Ambassador paid separate courtesy calls on Ghana's Majority Leader and Minister of Parliamentary Affairs Felix Owusu-Adjapong and Speaker of Parliament Ebenezer Sekyi Hughes. The Ambassador stressed the importance of parliament to Ghana's democracy and the promotion of good governance. She thanked the parliamentary leaders for their support in passage of important legislation such as the Anti-Trafficking in Persons bill.

[13.](#) USAID Director briefed on a two-year \$900,000 program to strengthen the capacity of parliament by bolstering civic input into legislation, parliament's research capacity, and its budgetary oversight. The Ambassador said we would also look for other ways to strengthen our support to parliament, such as through Public Affairs program such as the International Visitor's Program and through partnerships with organizations like the National Association of State Legislators.

[14.](#) Both contacts praised USG support for parliament and strong US-Ghana bilateral ties. The Speaker elaborated at length on the depth of U.S. support for Ghana over the decades.

Minister for Parliamentary Affairs

[15.](#) Minister Adjapong appreciated USAID's support for parliament's oversight of the budget. He was fascinated by U.S. congressional vetting procedures and hoped to increase the parliamentary vetting committee's exposure to the U.S. system. He saw his ministry as a bridge between the parliament and executive, reinforcing good governance.

[16.](#) He hoped for assistance with infrastructure, which is a major constraint for parliament, he said, noting the lack of meeting space. He also hoped for support with workshops and other means to educate District Chief Executives about their role in Ghana's democracy. They do not realize their own power and responsibilities to their communities. Too frequently District Chief Executives and communities turn to members of parliament for decisions, instead of trying to find local solutions. The USAID Director described the USAID Government Accountability Improves Trust program that helps communities and local governments to work together to address development priorities. In addition, Adjapong sought support in empowering civil society to make input into the drafting of legislation.

The Speaker of Parliament

[17.](#) Speaker of Parliament Sekyi Hughes said priorities for the current session of parliament were mining and whistleblower laws, the People's Representation Bill (giving expatriate Ghanaians the right to vote), and the budget. He was frustrated with Foreign Ministry controls on the processing of U.S. visa applications for parliamentarians.

Comment

[18.](#) Parliament is a weak player in Ghana, under-resourced and heavily dependent on and influenced by the executive. The Minister and Speaker were eager for our support. We will continue to look for ways to strengthen this key branch of government.

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